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WOMEN WORKERS AND SOCIETY

BY

Annie Marion MacLean, Ph.D.

Author of "Wage Earning Women"

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EDITOR'S PREFACE

THERE are two phases of the woman question which are more or less confused. One of these is the labor of women outside the home; the other is the participation of women in the franchise. There are now in the United States 8,000,000 women engaged in labor beyond the confines of the home. This is nearly a third of the workers of the country. What their status is, how they are treated, whether they have a place in the law, become questions of vital concern to national progress. The author has stated the problem and argued the main points in this compact, well-arranged book. She shows, too, the connection of women's labor with woman's vote. This phase of the problem is to be treated also in another book. However, the editor is glad to add Dr. MacLean's book to the series and to present it to those who desire a careful statement in condensed form regarding women workers and society.

F. L. M.

AUTHOR'S PREFACE

THIS little study of women workers is offered in the hope that it will interest people at large in an important class in society; namely, the eight million or more women who go out from home daily to the various tasks that the industrial and professional world offers to them. This large group of women profoundly affects social well-being, and for several reasons: (1) because it is numerically large, and is constantly growing larger; and (2) because the overwhelming majority are young, and are destined to be the mothers of the next generation of workers. It is, therefore, of vital interest to society that these young women have a fair chance in the world, in spite of some of the handicaps that their occupations inevitably place upon them.

The material used in this book is drawn from practically all of the available sources, including the census and other government reports, as well as special reports and investigations and observation of private bodies and

of individuals. It is not possible here to enumerate these aids more definitely, but the author wishes to express her sincere thanks to all the people who have consciously, or unconsciously, helped her to a greater knowledge of the young women who work, and the effects of their labor on society at large.

ANNIE MARION MACLEAN.

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WOMEN WORKERS AND SOCIETY

WOMEN WORKERS AND SOCIETY

Part One

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

THE labor of women outside of the home constitutes one of the most vital problems in American life. The reason for this is twofold: first, the fact that, to an unprecedented degree, women are engaging in gainful occupations; and second, the effect of their labor upon marriage and upon the home. Thus it is apparent that the labor of women evokes an interest quite apart from its physical accomplishment. It is the social effect of such labor that awakens thought, and ultimately resolves itself into action.

The problems of men who work for gain, which means practically all men, are quite distinct. It is beside the mark to insist that woman's place is in the home. Perhaps it was

once there, but the evolution of modern life has carried her far afield. We cannot stay the incoming tide, but we have been able to learn something of the forces creating its ebb and flow, and some of the results thereof, and we are thereby sometimes able to avert disaster. So it is with the forces effecting changes in industry. While we cannot, and perhaps would not, stay the change, we can profitably inform ourselves concerning the causes and results of the change, and we must do this if we would avert social disaster. A presentation of facts concerning the employment of women needs no justification. Women are of necessity so closely intertwined with home life that any forces tending to change this order of things is bound to affect for good or ill the whole social fabric.

Our industrial structure has grown up around man's labor, and is not yet adjusted to the capacity of women. This in itself causes grave difficulties. When woman simply rendered supplementary labor to man's, under our earlier systems of industry, the situation was different. She was then, in no sense, his competitor. But with the changes brought about

by the introduction of machinery and consequent development of the factory system, she became an economic factor, and entered the wage-earning group virtually as a competitor of man. She was a new factor in the wage system, and employers were at a loss how to value her services. They then established the fiction, since maintained, that women were working for "pin money," and therefore need not receive the rate paid to men. This undoubtedly affects the economic status of women today, while, in fact, "pin money" workers are a negligible quantity. In addition to this, women are as a rule not so strong physically as men, and while strength is not always a factor in industrial processes, it has been a potent argument in keeping women from entering to any extent certain occupations traditionally requiring strength.

But probably the most important cause tending to create an unfortunate condition for women workers is their extreme youth, and short wage-earning career, and consequent incompetence. They enter industry from fourteen to eighteen years of age, and leave it to marry at about the age of twenty-five, as a

rule. They are, therefore, not permanent factors in any occupation. This militates against their acquiring great skill. Too often, they consider their wage-earning period a makeshift. There is thus no inspiration to become skilled. The man, on the other hand, has every incentive to become proficient. He has entered upon a life work. It is true that women often reenter industry after marriage, but they then have a divided interest, and a double burden, particularly when there are children.

The whole social attitude toward woman, which fortunately is now undergoing change, though somewhat slowly, it must be admitted, creates problems for the one who must earn her daily bread. This attitude, at its finest, gives us a being kept remote from the hardships of life, and cared for tenderly in the home; at its grossest, it gives us a creature to be used by man as he wills, and incidentally cared for by him. The parasitic woman has been the standard; the normal standard certainly, if not the ideal one. The woman who deviates from this and becomes self-supporting runs counter to tradition, and even yet faces unfavorable or pitying comment. In the end

she may even pity herself, and this frame of mind does not tend to lend an interest and vigor to labor. Fortunately, however, economic necessity tends to obscure the vision of the "lady," and the woman goes forth to her task forgetful that she is losing caste. This social attitude perhaps affects women in the professions and other skilled occupations more than the industrial workers who have never been on terms of intimacy with the lady of leisure; although it is well known that the same social standards are found in all classes, the difference being of degree only.

It will be seen that the problem of woman's labor is at once intricate and interesting. Women are in the race with men, but handicapped by tradition, strength, and ambition. Yet it is not a losing game entirely, because an umpire in the form of the thinking public has entered the field, and is insisting upon the observance of rules. It was a long time before society became sufficiently interested to take a hand in establishing regulations for its women workers, and it may be said here that there has always been more or less opposition in certain groups to regulation. This opposition,

of course, comes largely from those of the employing class who profit most when workers are unprotected. This is an inevitable outcome of the competitive system of industry, and does not indicate special villainy in any one class. We all go into industry for financial gain, and the desire to have this gain as great as possible is very likely to cause us to overlook some of the niceties of social relations. The various processes must be carried on as economically as possible if profits are to appear. Therefore some employers feel that it is to their gain to overwork their employees. This is really a short-sighted policy; inasmuch as the overworked employee cannot give the most efficient service. The fact that there is always a margin of unemployed labor around or near every industrial plant, does not make this fact any less true. New workers must learn the details of the processes, and there is loss in the learning. Wise employers see this, and have undertaken to conserve their workers, with a view to making them more efficient, and thus capable of producing larger profits.

The minute division of labor seen in mod-

ern factory work today is responsible for a seemingly inhuman attitude on the part of the employer. Very little skill is required to guide a machine capable of turning out a very small portion of the finished product, and he finds he can work the employees he has to the limit, and then replace them with very little trouble to himself. Such specialization, or division of labor, has been hard on the skilled employee who formerly was capable of taking a raw product through a number of stages on its way to the finished state. This has been markedly true in the case of the manufacture of shoes. The oldtime cobbler made a pair of boots. The present-day shoe worker makes about one-sixtieth or one-seventieth of a pair, and he loses the general skill as well as interest in his limited task.

The young women most in need of the active sympathy of society are those upon whom the burden of labor presses most heavily. That is, those employed in the industrial, clerical, and mercantile groups where overwork and underpay are common. And it is to these workers that this study will confine itself. The needs of other toiling women, such as

those living in the country districts, are recognized, but their problems are so different that it would be difficult to combine them for purposes of discussion. The girls and women on the farms scattered over the rural districts need attention as well as industrial workers, but they cannot well be considered together. The needs of this group have been ably discussed in a recent book,[1] which is commended to all those interested in this particular phase of working women.

But the industrial workers are the ones who concern us here, because in this group we find great numbers of overworked and underpaid women of whom society must have a care if the highest type of social life is to be realized. There is always social wastage in overwork, and there is always the hideous haven of prostitution menacing girls who are underpaid. Reduced to economic terms, society can ill afford the annual physical and moral wreckage resulting from labor. To be informed in regard to these evils, then, is the first step toward their elimination. Intelligent effort to

[1] Crow, Martha Foote, *The American Country Girl.* F. A. Stokes Co., New York.

reform the abuses which have grown up around the labor of women is already bringing salutary effects; and it is this hopeful aspect of the situation that lends encouragement to a consideration of the subject in hand.

This is a study of young women counted by the million who go out early and labor a long day outside of the home, and too often with inadequate provisions for a healthy and happy life. But we aim to show not only the conditions of labor, but also the improvements that have been effected by society. It is with no apology for woman's labor that this book is presented; it is rather with the firm conviction that only in labor can the highest type of human being be realized. It is a poor life indeed that gives nothing to society in the way of honest work. Organized society must, therefore, protect women, with their manifold handicaps, in their inalienable right to the joy of labor; but it must, at the same time, protect itself from any sinister effects connected with the labor of women. There is thus a dual responsibility to be met in a straightforward manner.

CHAPTER II

WOMEN TOILERS OLD AND NEW

IT is trite to say that women have always worked, but it is necessary in order to correct the somewhat prevalent notion that woman is a new factor in industry, a factor antedating but little the industrial revolution. Woman from the beginning of time has done a large share of the work of the world. Unwritten, as well as written records, furnish evidence of this.

Certainly, since the time when "Adam delved and Eve span," work in its varied phases has been performed by women, either by themselves or in cooperation with men. In either case, they seem to have performed their tasks ungrudgingly.

In some instances, as among the ancient Romans, women were practically slaves, beaten on to their labor by their masters, the men; while in others, as among the ancient Germans, according to word pictures left by Tacitus, they toiled upon equal terms with the men,

and seemed to enjoy the cooperative life. But however the tasks are performed in a simple social organization, there can be but slight similarity between the problems arising therefrom and those arising under the more complex conditions of modern life. History only serves to show that woman generally in early ages, and, in fact, throughout the centuries, has not been an idler, the closest approach to that condition probably being found at the present time, when modern machinery has robbed millions of women of their age-old tasks without offering any substitution, and we find ourselves facing the strange situation of able-bodied women suffering from the ills of super-imposed leisure.

1. Comparisons and Contrasts

But it would carry us too far afield to outline the conditions under which women worked in the remote and interesting past. We must rather confine ourselves to such contrasts as are apparent between the domestic and earlier factory periods and the modern era in this country, which rather closely repeat the history in England. Under the domestic system, the

family, sometimes joined by the neighbors, worked in a home, or in a convenient shop, with tools of the simplest construction, and with great latitude allowed the individual in the matter of hours and speed.

In fact, such labor was usually auxiliary to household tasks, and was performed in what would otherwise be intervals of leisure. A case in point is spinning before the days of modern machines. The old-fashioned hand spinning wheel stood in the New England kitchen, where the housewife could give it a few turns as circumstances permitted. The hand loom in the loft likewise could be used in the same manner, and, while the women labored abnormally long hours, they had a wholesome variety of work; a variety which, while it may not conduce to great efficiency, certainly conduces to content, without which life is a hollow mockery.

When English methods were introduced into this country, conditions changed. Tasks became specialized, and the women who followed their old work to a new environment became an economic factor. This was a perfectly natural movement, but it gave us a new type

of woman, not the woman who worked, for she had always been with us, but the woman who worked *outside the home for pay.* She was a glorified creature. Work had long been considered the crowning virtue, and women and children of tender years were now urged on to it for their soul's good and, incidentally, to enrich the coffers of male relatives. An interesting case of the utilization of the services of an entire family is that of one Dennis Rier[1] of Newburyport, Massachusetts, who, in 1815, engaged to work on the following terms per week:

Himself	$ 5.00
Son Robert, aged 10	0.83
Daughter Mary, aged 12	1.25
Son William, aged 13	1.50
Son Michael, aged 16	2.00
	$10.58

Also

Sister Abigal	$ 2.33
Her Daughter Sally, aged 8	0.75
Her Son Samuel, aged 13	1.50
	$ 4.58

[1] Abbott, Edith, *Women in Industry,* pp. 268-269. D. Appleton & Co., New York.

Men of Rier's type were eagerly welcomed by employers, since it was with difficulty that they found all the laborers they needed.

The transition from the old to the new system of industry, with its portentous changes for women, may correctly enough be placed about the time of the beginning of American national life. During colonial days, the secrets of industry and machinery were jealously guarded by legislative enactment in England, and every effort was made to prevent the colonies from engaging in manufacturing for themselves, since it was the belief that such development would tend to make them independent. John Bright once said they should not be permitted to make "even so much as a horseshoe nail." England herself had made rapid strides in textile development, owing to a remarkable series of inventions dating from 1765 to 1785, the most notable of which were the spinning machines of Arkwright and Hargreaves, and the power loom of Cartwright. As has been said, the colonists were not permitted to use these inventions, but at the close of the struggle for independence, the new nation put forth unusual efforts to secure for

itself the advantages arising from improved machinery.

Samuel Slater, called by President Jackson "the father of American manufactures," went to England and worked as a cotton operative long enough to master the plans of machines, and with these in mind came home and built the first factory in the New World with perfected machinery made from the English models. It was erected at Pawtucket, Rhode Island, in 1790. After this, cotton factories sprang up rapidly in the New England states and Pennsylvania.

So rapidly in fact did the industry progress that in 1815 there was built in Waltham, Massachusetts, the first factory in the world to embody under one roof all the processes for changing raw cotton into finished cloth; and about this time there was one factory employing eight hundred women. From the very beginning, women were employed. This was inevitable, both on account of their previous connection with the industry at home, and because of a certain deftness that made them desirable workers.

During the first quarter of the nineteenth

century, the employment of women went on apace, and no alarmists sounded notes of warning. Conditions seem to have been satisfactory enough, judged by the unenlightened standards of that time. Hours were very long, from daylight to dark being the usual rule, yet few complaints were heard. This was probably due to the fact that the women employed were vigorous young creatures from the farms, whose sojourn in industry was short because of early marriage or the opening up of other occupations, but chiefly the former.

Stories have come down to us of the almost idyllic conditions existing in some mill towns during the first third of the nineteenth century. Dickens in his *American Notes* says of the women in the Lowell mills, when comparing them with the cotton spinners in England: "They looked like human beings, not like beasts of burden." He was impressed, too, by the aesthetic side of mill life. Window boxes with bright blossoms were everywhere to lend cheer to manual processes.

The story of the Lowell mills is full of interest. Here we find industry at its best. Lowell, known as the "City of the Spindles,"

was the most important of the early mill towns, and from the beginning of the factory period up to the present time has been closely identified with the history of the cotton industry. But the industrial Lowell of today is a vastly different place from that of the period between 1825 and 1850, when the best blood and brawn of New England thought it no compromise to earn an honest livelihood in the mills.

This was the period when young men of ambition were going west; and the sisters of these young men worked in the cotton mills or taught in the "Dames' schools," the financial advantage usually being with the former. A remarkable group of women it was too, including Lucy Larcom, a poet of no mean achievement, and spokesman for the self-supporting women of her age; and also Harriet Hanson, whose book of Lowell reminiscences called *Loom and Spindle* gives a fascinating picture of the period. For years these women and others published the *Lowell Offering,* a little magazine devoted to the interests of the girls, many of whom were earning money to go to such schools as Bradford Academy and Mt. Holyoke Seminary, while all made use of the un-

usual educational opportunities offered by the town of Lowell in the way of lectures and libraries. So assiduous were they in the cultivation of their minds, that they were frequently reprimanded, and sometimes discharged, for reading at the looms. Books had to be confiscated by the corporations. By 1840, there were over six thousand women in the Lowell mills, and since most of these came from remote places, special provision had to be made by the mill owners for their housing in corporation boarding-houses, where the girls were under close supervision.

Doubtless the interesting social life of these girls obscured much of the sordidness in the mills, where wages were low, hours inhumanly long, and ventilation of the worst. But it was none of these things that brought about changes in the old New England town; it was rather the first wave of foreign immigration. This brought thousands of Irish women, pursued by famine, to our industrial centers. It is true that these women went first into domestic service, but it was not long till they pushed their way into the mills by way of the least desirable tasks.

After this the change in personnel of the women cotton-mill operatives went on rapidly. The native girls were pushed up and out into higher occupations that were opening to them, particularly into school teaching in the new schools of the West as well as in the East. The old Lowell vanished. No more did mill girls flock to lectures; no more did they publish papers and write poetry; and no more were the spindles and looms operated by native American girls. This change from native to foreign-born workers took place in other industries as well as cotton, but the story of the change in the latter is sufficient to indicate its nature.

Fewer than a dozen occupations were open to women at the time of the first immigrant invasion, while today the doors of practically all employments are, theoretically at least, open to them. The census of 1910 lists four hundred twenty-eight occupations, in practically all of which women are found, and they outnumber men in seventeen of these. Men, it may be mentioned in passing, are found in all but one.[1] In 1900, there were more than three hundred

[1] That of midwife.

occupations listed, and only eight[1] of these reported no women, and these were places in which one would not be likely to expect women.

The groups of occupations in which women find employment are as follows: agricultural pursuits; professional service; domestic and personal service; trade and transportation; manufacturing and mechanical pursuits. In the year 1900 these divisions absorbed the service of five million women, while in 1910 the number had increased to eight millions, and each year as it passes gives a proportionately large increase of women entering industrial pursuits.

As has been pointed out frequently by students of the subject, it is in the manufacturing industries that the most serious evils of woman labor are seen. In 1900, there were 1,199,452 women engaged in these industries. In 1910, the number was 1,772,095. The large number of women engaged in domestic and personal service, 1,953,467 in 1900 and 2,620,857 in

[1] Street car drivers; foremen in the fire department; apprentices and helpers to roofers and slaters; helpers to steam boiler makers; and brass workers. There are no women among the soldiers and sailors of the United States.

1910, presents no new problems, since these women are at work in the sphere traditionally belonging to women, and are, for the present at least, except in the far west, quite outside the field of legislative and other measures of relief.

The large number engaged in agricultural pursuits represents farmers, planters, and overseers rather than day laborers, while the half million women engaged in professional services are, on the whole, able to make their own terms with the world. There is left but one other division, that of trade and transportation, to give us concern. Here we find another half million, but on a very different basis from the professional classes, inasmuch as it includes an army of the unskilled among clerks, stenographers, and saleswomen, who are competing with one another for a pittance, and who are in no economic position to make their demands for improved conditions felt.

There has been a great increase in the percentage as well as in the number of women employed gainfully during the last generation. In 1880, women workers formed 13.5 per cent of the total bread winners in the United States; in 1910, they formed 21.2 per cent. The in-

crease has been striking in the mercantile, clerical, and industrial groups, and it is in these particular groups that most of the hardships of the worker are found. A long day amid unsanitary conditions accompanied by unrelieved monotony, is too often the heritage of the factory and shop girl. This in time saps her physical and mental vigor. A certain degree of monotony[1] is desirable, inasmuch as it saves the wear and tear of constant readjustment, but when work consists only of the constant repetition of some minute and meaningless task, mental stimulus is entirely lacking, and work becomes drudgery.

To grow stale on one's work is to be only half a worker, and this condition reacts not only on the employee but on the employer as well. Whatever may be the advantages of modern industry over the old, the latter certainly contributed an interest in the finished product, which is practically unknown in the former. The shoemaker of bygone days fashioned the shoe himself, and could contemplate it on the wearer's foot with some satisfaction;

[1] Cabot, Richard C., *What Men Live By*, p. 32. Houghton Mifflin Company, Cambridge, Mass.

while the shoe worker of today, as has been pointed out, is only one of seventy or more operatives who take part in the making of the shoe, and who rarely see the finished product.

Women who make as simple a garment as a plain cotton wrapper often perform only one of nineteen processes. Such minute division of labor makes for speed but not for interest in work. It may be economically warranted from the employer's standpoint, but at the same time socially disastrous. The way to combat evil consequences, of course, is to shorten the hours and offset the dreariness of monotonous labor with stimulating recreation. It is questionable if the constant performance of minute and uninteresting tasks for several years renders a girl competent to assume the varied duties of home life after marriage. If it does not, there is great social loss involved. But here again ill consequences may be averted by more leisure together with its judicious use.

We may now pass in review the conditions in several industries absorbing great numbers of women in order to understand some of the problems involved.

2. Conditions in Typical Trades

Women have long been conspicuous in the textile industry, which is the largest consumer of woman labor, and also in the sewing trades; so conspicuous, in fact, that a discussion of the conditions surrounding them in these employments is important if we would understand thoroughly some of the problems of women at work. Spinning and weaving are age-old occupations for women, and they have become more difficult with the passing of the years. Under even the best conditions the air in textile factories is filled with lint, and the roar of machinery is deafening. There are improved devices for clearing the air, but none apparently for deadening sound. It is foreign women almost entirely who engage in this work, and they accept the disagreeableness, as they do their pay envelopes, with stolid faces.

In the making of cotton cloth, women are found in practically all of the many processes, from "mixing," that is, tossing or pulling the raw cotton apart somewhat, after the bales are opened, to spinning and weaving.[1] The air is

[1] For fuller discussion, see MacLean, Annie M., *Wage Earning Women*, p. 13, *et seq.* The Macmillan Company, New York.

usually full of cotton fluff, particularly in the card room, and the spinning rooms are excessively hot, especially in summer, owing to the generation of great heat by rapidly revolving spindles. The weaving rooms, too, are hot and usually damp. Ordinarily women tend from six to ten looms, though in some instances as many as twenty. It all depends on the strength and skill of the weaver, character of the work, and the kind of loom. Women in cotton mills do not work as many hours as they did fifty years ago, but they work at much higher speed, and with the ever-present anxiety of uncertain employment. The wages[1] paid run from five to ten dollars a week as a rule, but these figures do not mean much unless accompanied by a definite statement in regard to slack time, which is an important item in all industries — it is in fact one of the worker's greatest hardships. A daily wage, which on its face seems adequate, may, on account of periods of idleness, prove insufficient to meet the demands of a decent life. The really vital question about wages is the relation between the total annual earnings and the annual cost of living. The weekly wage

[1] *Wage Earning Women*, p. 17.

in seasonal or fashion trades may be good, but wholly insufficient to carry the worker over slack times. Mere figures are meaningless unless interpreted in the light of the foregoing.

It would seem that the sewing trades, long women's special province, might offer more attractive work for women than the textiles, and they probably would, were it not for speed exactions. The women who work at power machines, and these are used in practically all shops today, are at the mercy of a demon they cannot regulate. A few years ago, a speed of six hundred stitches a minute on a one-needle machine satisfied the employer; later the pacemakers reached twelve hundred, then twenty-two hundred a minute. Now a worker takes four thousand four hundred stitches a minute for each needle on ten and twenty-needle machines. Her task is only guiding, but it is quite as perilous as guiding runaway horses. And the wage for such speed is little if any higher than it was a few years ago, except where organized effort has been able to affect the wage scale. To "stitch, stitch, stitch in poverty, hunger, and dirt" is as common today as it was

when Thomas Hood deplored the fate of the "woman who sat in unwomanly rags plying her needle and thread." There are half a million women in the sewing trades in the United States today, and in an overwhelming majority of cases, their wages fall below seven dollars a week and frequently below six, when investigators assert that it costs from eight to nine to live respectably.

The piece-work system of payment prevails in all industries, although there are still processes paid for on a weekly basis. The former method furnishes an incentive to speed, and is doubtless advantageous to the employer. It rids him of the menace of the laggard, and worn-out workers are easily replaced, so easily replaced in fact that they are of no economic concern to the employer, although he may well heed the social wastage which in other forms takes taxes and alms for its support.

While shoemaking was originally men's work, it has long offered a field for women, and is in fact now, next to the textiles, the largest consumer of women's labor that we have. The first work done by women in the shoe trade was stitching and binding uppers,

which was entirely home work and was dovetailed in with housekeeping much as spinning and weaving were in the early days. The money earned by the women in this way was a great help in the family income, although it ranged only from twelve to fifty cents a day. Thousands of women were engaged in this work in Lynn and many other places as early as the first third of the nineteenth century. The great change came after 1845 with the introduction of sewing machines. With the application of power to the machines shoemaking became a factory occupation, and women were drawn from their homes as they had been in the case of other industries which developed earlier.

Lynn has always been an important shoe center, leading in the manufacture of women's shoes, and it is here that we find great numbers of women employed, the work being lighter than on men's shoes. There are at present 4,849 women in the shoe trade in Lynn; but Brooklyn and Philadelphia, the former with 1,067 and the latter with 887, also extend hazards as well as opportunities to women in the shoe industry.

3. Present-Day Occupations

According to the census report for 1900, there are one hundred and twenty-six distinct classes of operatives in the shoe industry, which shows a minute division of labor probably unknown in any other industry. The domination of the machine over hand labor is well nigh complete here, and machine domination always means a high percentage of woman and child labor.

An interesting fact concerning this trade is that over eighty per cent of the women employed are native born. These native women have been able to hold their own against the immigrant invasion which has captured many other industries. It has been suggested that this may be due to the fact that it is distinctly an American industry, and foreigners have no skill to offer.

It will be seen from the foregoing brief discussion of a few industries employing large numbers of women that their labor fits into the scheme of economic development, and that it

is utilized whenever and wherever profitable, regardless of social consequences. While each industry has its own peculiar hardships, the chief hazards in all industries are low wages, unsanitary workshops, and long hours at high speed; but all of these are now matters of legislation in some states, and these laws will be discussed later.

The wage question has always been a serious one for women. Custom, working with certain other forces, such as youth and lack of skill, has persistently kept women's wages considerably below the level of men's. They have been and still are from a third to a half lower than men's in industrial occupations. Yet, in all fairness, it cannot be said that the lower wage is paid to women for equal work, since men and women rarely engage in the same processes. Where they do, however, as in certain organized trades, the tendency is toward an equal wage. Ordinarily, women are called upon to take up the industrial tasks requiring little skill, and consequently offering a low wage. The really vital question at present in regard to the wages of women, is not that they be made equal to men's, though that will come even-

tually, but that they shall be made adequate to the needs of life.

An industry unable to pay a living wage should be crushed out; it is parasitic, and not entitled to economic consideration. No industry that preys upon another has a right to exist. Women receiving less than a living wage for their labor must obtain the necessary support from some quarter, and it is at this point that we see the menace of the social evil. It has yet to be proved that industrial work induces women to a life of shame. Investigations thus far have shown a high degree of moral integrity among young self-supporting women, yet it must be admitted that girls, young, alone, and underpaid, are frequently subjected to a maximum of temptation. Society can ill afford to place young girls in such a perilous position. That they withstand temptation as well as they do is most creditable. But underpaid workers are likely to be underfed, and poorly fitted to grapple with overwork in unsanitary places. They come to the physical breaking point sooner or later, and society pays the cost while parasitic industries continue to thrive, unmindful of the social cost of their product.

4. The Nationality of Workers

No discussion of women workers in this country is complete without some mention of our foreign population, since it is from this source that the workers in the manufacturing industries are largely drawn. The effect of the influx of the Irish upon the cotton industry has already been mentioned. The entrance of other nationalities into this and other occupations has not been less conspicuous as the years have passed. Domestic service, for example, except in the Southern states, is practically given over to foreigners.

While it is true that the male immigrants have always far outnumbered the female, sometimes in the ratio of three or four to one, it is also true that enough women have been coming each year since the early eighties to put their stamp on many industries. There are more than thirteen million foreigners in the United States at the present time. If four million of these are women, we have a number sufficiently large for consideration. They form practically the sole supply of sweatshop labor in our great cities, and they are found wherever there

is a demand for unskilled labor. This heterogeneous mass at once creates problems. There is always a lower standard of living to confront the native worker, and make more difficult her struggle for higher wages.

It has long been known that the chief difficulty arising from immigrant labor is due to its congestion in the great cities and in the manufacturing towns. Owing to this, women press upon one another in industry, each new nationality in turn pushing in at the bottom, and crowding out those unable to bear the strain of a low subsistence standard. The pressure of the Italians upon the Jews in the garment trade in New York is a good illustration of this fact. Newly arrived foreigners are willing to undertake any labor, however unpleasant or unfavorable its conditions, that gives them a foothold in industry. Dogged determination to achieve success in the new world, together with lack of knowledge of what to expect, leads the stranger to accept without question hardships that may be imposed. Thus it comes to pass that long hours, low wages, and bad physical conditions are the heritage of the new arrival.

An alien tongue is the really serious barrier to improvement. Nationality becomes pitted against nationality in the fierce struggle to make a living, and the weaker ones are pushed against the wall and frequently become a serious burden to society. There are over thirty nationalities in this country, each one furnishing its own peculiar problems and affecting to a considerable degree all women toilers. But Jew, Italian, Austrian are in the process of becoming Americans, and it is this that lends a vital interest to the women in industrial life today.

CHAPTER III

INDUSTRY AND THE HOME

THE point of greatest interest, so far as the labor of women is concerned, is the possible effect of their employment upon the home. It is not possible at this stage of the wage-earning activity of women to determine, with much accuracy, just what this effect is. It is scarcely a generation since women began going out to labor in great numbers in office, shop, and mill.

Modern industry in its truest sense is hardly more than a generation old. The nerve-breaking speed demanded in industry is new. The speed mania which now holds the industrial world in its grip is in reality a twentieth century product. Thus it would seem premature to deduce conclusions from so limited a period. But, even though a sufficient time has not elapsed to enable us to determine the effect of women's labor on the race, we are at liberty to observe tendencies and on these to base some conclusions.

1. The Condition of Poverty

It is a well-known fact that a condition of abject poverty does not provide the best physical environment for the child; and it is also a well-known fact that this is the condition in which the families of most unskilled laborers live in our great industrial centers. In such families the labor of women seems essential to the maintenance of even the semblance of a home.

There are several ways in which the employment of women affects the home unfavorably, the most obvious of which are, first, the going out to work on the part of mothers of young children, and, second, the doing of home work, as in the sweated trades, in either of which cases the family is neglected and virtually left to shift for itself. It is in such families that we see the pathetic service of the "little mother," who, though sometimes not more than eight years old, takes sole care of a younger brother or sister, carrying the child around if it is unable to walk and solicitously, though with questionable judgment, feeding it often with food no more nourishing than cold

coffee, "red hots," or any other morsel at hand when infantile hunger is insistent. To meet this situation, training classes for "little mothers" have been organized in several cities. But this is only a makeshift after all, since the real problem is to give the mother back to her children, and not to train the children to take care of one another.

In other ways also the deleterious influence of the industrial employment of women on the home may be seen. Young girls whose strength is sapped by work before marriage are but poorly equipped for the duties of wifehood and motherhood, and when they assume these duties, as they inevitably do, the homes suffer. Reasonable labor performed under good sanitary conditions should have no baneful effect on young women.

The trouble is that so much work is done under high tension in unsanitary places, which simply means that industry has developed more rapidly than ethical standards concerning its management. It betokens a state of society where the activities of bread winning are a menace to health and happiness. The human creature at work is always of more real value

to society, in the last analysis, than the goods he produces can possibly be, yet our present industrial practice would indicate that he is of insignificant importance. This condition is not so much a result of individual wickedness on the part of employers, as of general laxity on the part of the public. In any case the women suffer most, and, through them the families, when industry presses hard against life.

2. Mother and Children Employed

Obviously it is to information concerning employed married women that we must turn when trying to discover the extent of industrial inroads on the home, and statistically it appears there are comparatively few married women gainfully employed outside the home in this country. Only about fifteen per cent of all the women at work were reported as married by the census of 1910, and upon analysis it is found that many of these are Negroes in the South, to whom marriage makes no appreciable difference in industrial status. This leaves only a small percentage of white married women employed, and of these we are told that the majority are dressmakers, who are ordina-

rily on a sufficiently firm financial basis to enable them to provide adequate care for their families. It therefore appears that the married woman is not a factor of importance in industry in the United States, as she is in European countries, where a woman does not lose caste by continuing a wage earner after marriage, as she is very likely to do among native Americans. The American family standard has always been a bread-winning father, and a mother occupying herself with the care of her children. Any deviation from this custom is cause for comment. Pride on the part of our native workmen serves to keep their wives out of the ranks of wage earners. It is therefore almost entirely among our immigrant workers that we find the serious phases of the employment of married women.

One who is at all familiar with textile towns in the North Atlantic states knows that many married women are at work in the mills. This is noticeably true, for example, in Fall River and Cohoes. These, and similar towns having a large foreign population, have a high percentage of married women employed, thus showing the influence of foreign standards on

American life. And upon the well-being of immigrant homes depends in large measure the eventual well-being of American society.

It has been found that wherever mothers of young children are employed, there is an abnormally high rate of infant mortality. In Fall River one-half the deaths are those of children under five. This deplorable state of affairs can be remedied only by widespread education of mothers, the enactment of laws prohibiting their employment for a given period before and after the birth of children, and, in addition, general activity on the part of the municipality. This activity must include rigidly enforced health regulations, district nursing, and any other aids necessary to the saving of baby life. The weaker infants die where industry lays its heavy hand upon mothers, but the little ones who are left have to battle for existence, till, old before their time, they too are drawn into work at great machines without ever having had a real chance to be normal children.

3. The Girl Worker in the Family

The position of the girl worker in the typical industrial family is rarely a desirable one.

She undertakes self-support, and yet is seldom economically independent, owing to the custom invariably found among our alien races of requiring the children's pay envelopes to be turned in to the mother, while she hands back a pittance for carfare and small necessities. The mother thus becomes the custodian of the family funds, since the father, too, if he desires to be considered a good husband, must give his unopened pay envelope to his wife. Custom is insistent in demanding that this be done.

The ultimate effect of such a custom upon the husband does not concern us here; but its effect on the working daughters is significant. So long as they remain at home they are economically dependent upon their mother and do not learn the value of money. When they, in turn, marry and become treasurers for their families, they have no experience from which to draw, and fall into many errors. They heedlessly plunge into buying "on time," that special extravagance of wage earners. By way of illustration, the case of a young married woman whose husband earned twenty-two dollars a week when work was steady may be

cited. One day she bought a sixty-five dollar brass bed, and a forty-dollar rug for eight dollars down, and a dollar a week, unmindful of the fact that her husband might soon be out of work, and that for nearly two years, the collector would be making weekly calls, which would be burdensome enough if she always had money to meet the obligation; or, if she had not, that she would lose all she had paid. Her trouble was that she had had no training in expenditure, and no realization of her responsibility in handling the family funds. Before her marriage, she worked in an overall factory, and her mother demanded and received the daughter's wages. An arrangement whereby the girl could pay a definite sum for board and lodging and keep the rest of the weekly wage for herself, would be infinitely better for all concerned. Doubtless the future will show improvement in this direction. With the present widespread movement to extend political equality to woman is bound to come a spirit of economic independence among young girls who work. This is not at all incompatible with the discharge of filial obligations.

Perhaps one of the gravest evils from which

the laborer's family has to suffer is lack of knowledge of home-making on the part of the women. This is not characteristic of wage-earning families alone, but the misfortunes of ignorance are accentuated here. Girls who go out to work at an early age have little opportunity to become acquainted with the domestic arts, and when they leave industry for marriage they are not at all prepared for the new tasks they have assumed. When coupled with poverty, such ignorance is disastrous. Home becomes a place of discouragement, instead of a strong defense against the misfortunes of life; as a result, families are frequently broken up and become a burden upon society.

Undoubtedly, girls who go into industry should be given an opportunity for instruction in the rudiments of domestic science before undertaking to manage homes of their own. This can best be accomplished by the public schools, though the work might well be supplemented by private classes conducted by organizations in touch with industrial workers. It is an undisputed fact that men flock to the saloons from wretchedly forlorn homes and uninviting food. This statement on its face

seems to fix the blame for much intemperance among men upon the women at home. Such an interpretation, however, is hardly fair. The responsibility for this condition is rather a social one. Under our present economic order, young girls from families of the poor must go into industry, which offers a questionable apprenticeship for the occupation of wife and mother. With slavish labor, and the constant pressure of poverty, it is small wonder that women grow careless and men go to the saloon. Poor food, badly cooked, is probably the most effective home wrecker that we have. We cannot successfully legislate against this destroyer, but it can be laughed out of court. Housekeeping is a skilled occupation, but its laborers are recruited largely from the ranks of the unskilled. Such a situation would not be tolerated in industry. Society has gone on the assumption that a strong romantic attachment between two young people, cemented by the magic of a marriage ceremony, endows the one who has to assume the burden of housekeeping with the requisite skill. As well might we assume that it endows the bread-winner with the skill necessary to support a family.

4. The Laborer's Home

Closely allied with unfavorable home conditions in the laborer's family, is the question of inadequate housing. In great cities, accommodations are usually poor, and rents almost prohibitive. This leads to boarders and lodgers as a means of defraying expenses, and they often utterly destroy family privacy. Model tenements help to relieve this situation, but they are still so few in number that they do not go far toward solving the problem. European cities have pointed the way to better things with their many municipally owned tenements, which are attractive, comfortable, and cheap.

Undoubtedly, much has been done to overcome the ill effects of labor on the part of mothers of young children by the establishment of day nurseries and other means of taking care of children during the day. Some of the larger cities have provided, through private initiative, model tenements with day-nurseries attached. These have been quite successful in so far as they provided good home surroundings at low rents. There is sometimes, how-

ever, a difficulty in regard to regulations, because most of these model institutions have a list of "don'ts," and this list is not always pleasing to the self-respecting laborer and his family.

Without doubt, some scheme of cooperative living that would lessen expense, and at the same time provide wholesome care for young children whose mothers must work offers possibilities for the future. If playgrounds and nurseries can be connected with the home, the situation for the mother is much simpler than when she has to take her child, or children, to some place remote from her home, and possibly remote from her work. This consumes too large a proportion of the day to make it a satisfactory arrangement, but with kindergartens and other means of instructing and entertaining children at hand in the tenement itself, the situation is much simpler. Some of the older tenements, as, for example, the Riverside in Brooklyn, New York, erected as early as 1887, provide all of these conveniences, and the great courtyard, with its sand piles and band stand, and other diversions, is a most attractive place to look upon. The tendency in the newer

model tenements is perhaps to utilize the roof more than ever before, and this has great possibilities for pleasure, and should be considered seriously when buildings are being erected on expensive ground.

Supervised playgrounds for children are also a great help to working mothers, as they can feel assured for at least a few hours during the day, that the children may play in safety. But none of these things provide the real solution to a very difficult problem, namely, the employment of mothers of young children. Our social and industrial arrangements should leave the mother free from industry while the children need her care.

The going away from home to work on the part of the mother is not more serious than the work of the mother carried on in the home, as in the sweated industries. In these, the children not only have no care, but there is a constant temptation to utilize their services; and so we find, in sweated homes, children of remarkably tender years, as young as four or five, in certain instances, contributing their little portion to the day's work, and thus to the day's pay. Such labor is not conducive to phys-

ical well-being, and the child who has no chance to develop physically has a poor chance to develop in any other way. Our almshouses are filled with paupers from the child-laboring class.

One scheme for keeping mothers with their children is the establishment of little places on the edges of our cities, where by means of cultivating the soil in a small way, families can be self-supporting much more easily than under the stress of industrial labor. If industrial families could be induced to take up such homes, it is likely that, in a majority of cases at least, the father, with such help as the place would give him, could care for the needs of the family without having the mother in industry also. The added healthfulness of this simple country life, would have its advantages for the children, and in addition to this they could reap the educational and other advantages that come from making little gardens for themselves. All of these things must be considered as possibilities in trying to mitigate the hardships of the working mother's life. The maintenance of the home must always be the first consideration.

Industry and the home may go along side by side, but when the former encroaches upon the latter, to its detriment, the best interests of society at large are jeopardized, and this should not be permitted. In so far as woman's employment in industrial pursuits contributes to this condition, it is to be deplored, and the ensuing social loss must greatly overbalance any economic advantage that may accrue.

CHAPTER IV

WOMEN AND INDUSTRIAL CONFLICTS

SO frequent have industrial conflicts become that industry is often referred to as warfare. The differences between employer and employees are more sharply accentuated as our industrial system has grown more complex.

1. The Causes of Discontent

The old neighborly relation passed away when workers were assembled in great numbers in large factories and developed into mere machine tenders, and a purely business relationship succeeded. The unknown employer too often became an ogre to his workmen, when he was in reality a human enough person, whose dominant interest was in accumulating dollars. Lack of personal relations tended to breed distrust on both sides. Moreover, workmen herded together had opportunity to discuss grievances which more often than not were real, and bitterness was engendered.

Labor organizations grew up, before the

middle of the last century, as a result of the inefficacy of individual struggles. But this evolutionary process did not include women to any extent. They have, until recently, been in industry, but not of it. They have been slow to develop a professional interest in their occupations. While men were engaged in trying to improve the conditions in their trade, women were making plans to escape from industrial tyranny by the avenue of marriage. They were transients in their trades, and transients have never been a potent force in reform. There must be a more or less permanent interest to insure cooperation, and this the great majority of women have never had. As has been pointed out elsewhere, they are not fixtures in industry, as their brothers are. Moreover, their immaturity has been a barrier to united action for their own good.

In addition to this, undoubtedly, the attitude of men workers has had much to do with the lack of interest in general labor conditions on the part of women. This attitude, however, is changing, theoretically at least, and may be in part responsible for the change that is coming over women. Men have inconsistently re-

sented the intrusion of women in industry, although they welcomed the resulting wage into the family income.

While women have evinced but little interest in trade unionism, they have made excellent strikers, enduring unflinchingly incredible hardships rather than go back to work without a redress of grievances. Often unions, organized and grown to great proportions in time of stress, have dwindled down to nothing when peace prevailed. But this is not characteristic of trade unions alone. The spirit of strife is frequently a great unifier, and the need of the hour rouses to action. People will join in protest who never would unite for any other purpose. In the early days, protest against unsatisfactory conditions was the only force which brought women workers together. Long before unions were thought of as a specific for industrial ills, women used the strike, the "turn-out" or "flare-up," as it was called, to bring recalcitrant employers to terms in regard to wages. There is a record of a "turn-out" as early as 1829, and there is one recorded even in Lowell in the thirties. Both of these were against a reduction in wages. And in March

25, 1836, the *Boston Evening Transcript*[1] stated that "the factory girls of Amesbury have had a flare-up and turned out. . . . The girls were told they must tend two looms in the future, by which they would weave double the number of yards that they now weave on one loom, and this without any advance of wages. . . . They proceeded to the Baptist vestry, chose officers, and passed resolutions, pledging themselves, under a forfeiture of five dollars, that they would not go back at all. The agent, finding them determined to persevere, sent a written notice that they might come back." It would be an advantage to everybody if strikes today were settled as simply.

A number of instances are on record, before the middle of the last century, of girls going on strike, and in all of these they seem to have been victorious. They recognized the value of a cooperative weapon, if not that of permanent organization. These early "flare-ups" of the women were small, and not especially far-reaching in their consequences. At a later date, however, the women began to make themselves felt.

[1] Quoted in *Women in Industry*, p. 131.

This was first done effectively in the Fall River strike of 1875. The previous year the men operatives, meeting without the women, accepted a wage reduction for all workers, regardless of sex. Later the women met without the men, and decided to strike, at first in only three mills, so that the others could go on working to support the strikers. This bold action was finally endorsed by the men's committee, and a general strike called.

2. Strikes and Trade Unions

More recent instances of the tenacity with which women will fight in industrial warfare are familiar to many. During the last dozen years the strikes of the collar starchers at Troy; the hatters in Danbury, and the garment workers in New York, Philadelphia, and Chicago, are notable illustrations of the way in which women will work for a principle. The women in the collar factories lost the fight and the leaders were blacklisted, but the strikers learned, as they had never learned before, the force of the inquiry: "Am I my brother's keeper?" The starchers, previously hand-workers, resented the introduction of a ma-

chine, which, by turning out imperfect work, virtually cut their wages in two. The other collar workers went out in sympathy, and the industry was paralyzed for months. Collar starching, it appears, has always been a highly skilled trade, and a basic one in the collar industry, since the ultimate size, shape, and wearableness of the collar depend upon the process of starching, and there were comparatively few skilled starchers outside of Troy. But this fact did not suffice to win the strike. Yet fifteen hundred women stood together, aye, starved together, for ten months, rather than yield to what they believed to be the unjust demands of the employers.

Again, we have the now famous shirtwaist-makers' strike which occurred in New York City in 1910, and gained wide publicity for several different reasons. It was a protest against inhumanly low wages and unduly hard working conditions by a large group of young girls engaged in that branch of the garment workers' trade. Before the strike was ended upwards of 100,000 were involved. It was one of the most spectacular conflicts that we have ever had. Young workers always tend to en-

list the interest of thinking people, and so large a group, struggling in the heart of a great city, with an industry touching very close the comfort of the well-to-do, as well as those in straitened circumstances, aroused, as never before, the interest of non-wage-earners.

Public sentiment seemed to be wholly with the strikers. Great numbers of women of social and financial standing gave unstintingly of their time and influence to help to right the conditions against which the girls were struggling. This very fact, of course, tended to make the contest spectacular. It was no uncommon sight to see women of social position picketing with the strikers, and in more than one instance they were arrested and taken to the night court, on charges varying from disorderly conduct to assaulting the police. Such women, of course, were able to establish their identity, as well as their innocence, and they worked bravely to prevent the commitment of the young strikers on similar charges, but they were not always successful, and many a girl was sent to the "Island" to serve a term, because she was unable to establish her right to speak in her own behalf.

Peaceful picketing is well within the law, but the difficulty seemed to be in the interpretation of the term "peaceful." Many persons at that time lost sight of the main issue in the heat of the contest between magistrates and workers in regard to the rights of the latter. This strike, perhaps more than any other that we have had where women have taken the initiative in settling their own grievances, showed what could be accomplished by united action, even with a miscellaneous group of nationalities—particularly when they had the moral as well as the financial support of influential members of a great city. It served to show the growing solidarity among women. It revealed, as never before, the genuine feeling of sisterhood, which many had not believed existed.

The outcome of the strike was favorable to the workers and resulted in the famous "protocol," by which wages and sanitary conditions were to be regulated for a given period. This worked successfully until recently, but now chaos again reigns. The interests of manufacturers, as well as workers, were considered. No contest could ever be regarded as success-

ful which rendered a decision manifestly unfair to either of the contending parties. But it was possible in this case to effect a readjustment which meant better conditions for all concerned. The striking shirtwaist-makers of Philadelphia and Chicago did not have so successful an outcome to their struggles, which were brought to a head about the same time. But as a result of the conflict in all of these cities, the workers in this trade labored for several years more favorably than ever before.

There have been a number of other strikes among women, successful and unsuccessful, which tend to show that a feeling in favor of organization for mutual improvement exists. This is probably the most significant feature to be noted. The fact of a fight in itself does not carry with it an indication of aroused community feeling, but it does serve to show that young women workers are recognizing their responsibility toward one another so far as conditions of labor are concerned.

In the strike just referred to, the activity of the Woman's Trade Union League[1] was clearly

[1] Mrs. Raymond Robins is the National President of this organization, which has its headquarters in Chicago, and the national organ is *Life and Labor.*

seen. This is an organization for the purpose of furthering the interests of unionism among women, and the membership includes not only actual wage-earners, but others who see the value of unionism to the whole social group. During the last ten years or more it has grown to be a national organization of great consequence in the labor world. It has branches in a half dozen large cities, and is actively engaged in the crusade for organizing women in their trades. In her recent book on labor unions[1] Miss Helen Marot maintains that it is difficult to say how much of a factor the league has been in stimulating interest in organization among women, but that it has been a factor of no small importance is evident to those who are studying the situation. As was said before, whether it be this organization or not that is at work, some force is certainly tending to rouse women workers to take a vigorous interest in their own conditions of labor.

Union men, too, are interested now in forming trade unions among women. This has not always been their attitude. In fact, until com-

[1] Marot, Helen, *American Labor Unions.* Henry Holt & Co., New York.

paratively recent years organized men were more or less hostile toward recognizing women in their trades, but circumstances have tended to change their point of view and now they not only assist in forming organizations of women, but have opened practically all of their own unions to women working in those trades which have long been organized among men. The male trade unionist's attitude was undoubtedly originally due to his desire to preserve family life and make it possible for the male head of the household to support the other members in what comfort he could. He had long resisted the entrance of all members of a family into wage-earning careers, on the ground that the combined wage is seldom much more than the wage that should be earned by one man working alone. Hard conditions of life, however, with keen competition and practically no regulating force but greed, have modified his belief. But he still takes the somewhat high ground that if the women of his family are to work in wage-earning occupations they must be protected, and if not by their male relatives, then by trade organizations.

As has been emphasized before, young wage-

earning women themselves are slow to ally themselves with a trade organization, for the reason that their stay in the trade is likely to be temporary, since the overwhelming majority of them withdraw from industry to marry at about the age of twenty-five on the average. It is only by a recognition of the fact that we are all members one of another that this careless attitude in regard to the value of organization can be overcome. The older women naturally see the benefits of organized effort and are perhaps inclined to take a broader view than the young worker, whose interest is ordinarily centered more in herself than in her occupation, or the occupation and interests of others.

3. Attitude Toward Group Action

Women's attitude toward group action in any line has, until comparatively recent years, been characterized by indifference, and this attitude prevails today, except among the most enlightened. It is small wonder, then, since such is the case with women in general, that young working girls have not been greatly impressed by the value of organized effort. It takes

imagination to picture the advantages of unionism, and clear vision to project these benefits into the future. This may be one of the reasons why organization so frequently has grown out of strife. A common grievance has led, in many cases, to a permanent organization.

There are those who assert that industrial strife is largely a result of trade unionism, and claim that without organization the strife would be impossible. This line of reasoning, however, does not seem to accord with the fact. Doubtless organization once effected can be made powerful to handle cases of strife, but so far as young working women are concerned, the hardships of labor, rather than an effective organization, have tended to breed strife. It is much more interesting to fight today for some immediate, tangible thing, like an increase in wages, than to maintain an organization and struggle years for a principle. The younger workers are, the more likely are they to do the thing that presents the most interesting field. This may not always be for their own good, but it is a kind of activity that may always be expected from young groups anywhere, and young working women are not essentially dif-

ferent from other young people in any social group.

The recognition of one's responsibility for his neighbor is a somewhat new element in industrial life, and it has undoubtedly grown with the trade-union movement, although through the tenets of unionism it is limited in its application. The unionist has a care for his neighbor if he be a union member, otherwise he is not entitled to consideration. While this may not be brotherly love at its best, it is, however, the logical consequence of class organization of any kind.

The trade-union movement among women is somewhat new, and its power is difficult to estimate, owing to the fact that its extent is unknown. Any figures in regard to membership are hardly more than good guesses. The women unionists themselves are not eager to reveal their membership lists, since it might work against them with their employers if their affiliations were known. Again, many women are members of men's or "mixed" unions, and no separate lists are kept.

Membership in practically all unions is now, theoretically at least, open to women, but the

women are somewhat slow to avail themselves of its privileges and responsibilities. In seeking a cause for this we must hark back to the oft-repeated statement that women are not permanent factors in industry. This seems to militate against efficiency, and it also serves, it would appear, to stifle an interest in trade organization. What is the use, they think, to join the union for a short time when their expectation is to leave industry for marriage at an early date? It is cause for encouragement, however, that the broader view of the possibility of benefiting those who do stay in the trade as well as those who are continually entering, is beginning to prevail in certain quarters, and when this view becomes quite general, the condition of women workers will be vastly improved. This view should prevail, because the wage-earning woman practically always marries into a wage-earning family, and her interest in the conditions of labor should not be allowed to grow lukewarm, if her new family relations are to be of benefit to the community, as all family relations should be.

Individual responsibility for social maladjustments is not an easy doctrine for the young,

inexperienced wage-earner to grasp, and it is hardly a fair charge to make against her that she does not grasp this, when hundreds of thousands of women in the more favored classes have not yet a dawning consciousness that if one member suffers all the other members suffer with her. When men and women of education and leisure have fully developed social consciences, it will be time enough to censure the young and oft-times ignorant worker for her lack of this same feeling of responsibility for her sister workers.

The women, however, have been greatly stimulated through one cause or another during the last decade, and this is a hopeful sign, since unionism *per se* contains very many desirable elements, and must be regarded as one of the most beneficial phases of recent industrial development. Unionism is more than militancy, although it has now, and has had in the past, militant features. This does not mean, however, that unionism is always to remain in the militant stage. Women workers as well as men doubtless need the ministry of peace, but when civilized nations have not yet reached the stage of development that demands

it, it is a large order to require that our industrial workers shall put aside all desire for organization, coupled with strife, desirable as this might be. We must always remember that in studying industrial conditions we are dealing with people as they are, not as we might desire that they should be, and that, therefore, we must be contented with the best attainable state, even though this may be far from the most desirable.

A very interesting feature in the development of trade unionism among women is the changing attitude of young workers toward group action. This is because they are learning something of its power. There have been times when women have scoffed at the idea of binding themselves together to obtain a desired end. They have had but little confidence in the power of united effort, though they are gaining this as the years pass. But unionism has brought more than confidence to women workers. It has taught them cooperation; it has taught them business methods; and it has taught them loyalty, not only to one another, but to a cause. The latter is an indication of higher development. Many are loyal to a per-

sonal effort who would not think of holding themselves loyal to an abstract principle.

Women in the organized trades conduct their meetings in the most business-like manner, and they are always willing to sacrifice themselves for the good of the order. This becomes stimulating when thousands and thousands are banded together for a common cause. Representatives from women's organizations are now received in practically all the councils of unionism in the land, and they make good delegates.

Unionism stands for equal suffrage. While this is true, it is also true that the earlier organizations among women were a little slow to insist upon a suffrage plank in their platform. It was on the whole unpopular, and they could see no special benefit to be derived from it. Now, however, things have changed. Equal suffrage is in the air. It is no longer a vague theory; it is an established fact in a number of states, and working women have come to feel that it is a powerful weapon, particularly when asking for legislative reforms.

The wage-earner needs the ballot perhaps more than her protected sister, and moreover she is determined to have it. She knows it is

the only direct method of gaining improved conditions of labor for herself and her children. Suffrage organizations are now incomplete without labor representation, and recognition of this fact has made for the solidarity of womankind in the present struggle for greater political power. Shop girl and factory girl have made common cause with women of education and leisure and wealth, and the union of all of these interests is the great factor that is going to put equal suffrage in the lawbooks.

Wage-earners have found that dependence upon the whim of a kind employer is at best a poor substitute for state control. Whatever the extension of suffrage may bring to certain classes of women in the way of enlarged opportunities, there is no question but that to the wage-earner it would mean an enhanced liberty. In a democracy, the women workers must be free, and if the ballot makes for freedom, then the ballot they must have.

Male workers, in this country at least, have developed their unionism by themselves. With the women the situation is different. They have, from the beginning, enlisted the interest and support of women more fortunately placed

both educationally and financially, and many of their fiercest battles have been waged with the help of these non-workers. They are going hand in hand to a higher plane of womanhood, where all labor is regarded as honorable, and all effort for improvement as noble.

Part Two

CHAPTER V

LEGISLATIVE AND OTHER AIDS TO THE NEEDS OF WOMEN WORKERS

WE have seen in an earlier chapter that, out of the rapid development of the factory system in America, many abuses hitherto unthought of and unknown crept in, not necessarily because no one cared whether conditions were good or bad, but because many of the people cared most of all to make a great deal of money. This being the dominant thought, it is not surprising that employers took little heed of the conditions under which they brought their employees together.

The output was the one consideration of consequence, therefore it was inevitable that long hours should be spent in unsanitary surroundings. It was a thoroughly vicious policy, to be sure, which allowed employers to work their employees to the limit of endurance. Now that we are so absorbed in the whole question of

efficiency, we look back with some scorn upon such waste of human energy, and consequently such a limitation of output. Efficiency experts have shown us that no workman can do his best, that is, make the most money for his employer, when his strength is continually being sapped beyond the point of endurance, but factory evils came into existence before the efficiency expert was thought of.

Philanthropists of two or three generations ago thought the situation was sad, but it never occurred to them to call it stupid. Moreover, human life has always been cheap, and the employer has seldom found it difficult to replace labor when it is worn out. It has always been considered the part of wisdom to conserve machinery, but to dream of the conservation of human life was left for mere sentimentalists.

The young women who worked in the old mill towns of New England before the Irish immigration, did not complain about long hours, because they were vigorous young people from the country, who spent a comparatively short time in the factories, and the strain upon them was not nearly so great as it became later, when the immigrant commenced to push in to

various industries, carrying with him his lower standard of living. This, we saw in an earlier chapter, caused great hardship for the workers of New England, but the readjustment was finally effected, and the native-born American worker found herself pushed up in the scale of industry, and, in many instances, into the several professions then open to women.

1. Early Abuses

Since Massachusetts was the first state to develop the manufacturing industries on a large scale, she was the first to find grave abuses facing her, and was also the first to attempt to rectify these abuses by legislation. The first law was passed in Massachusetts in 1867, and this with its various amendments has formed the basis of factory legislation in most of the other states. So far as women workers are concerned, labor legislation has centered on the length of the working day and sanitary conditions, though recently the question of wages has been taken up through the minimum wage boards.

Other labor legislation such as the guarding of machinery when in motion, the stopping of

machinery for cleaning purposes, the number of cubic inches of air space per person, and similar provisions affecting men and children quite as much as they do women, need not be discussed here in detail, since this study deals with women workers. Incidently, it may be said that men have always been the gainers in legislation designed primarily for women, because they have benefited by shorter hours, and better sanitary conditions where they are employed with women, and women have also been benefited by legislation designed primarily for men, so that ameliorative legislation of any kind is likely to prove beneficial to all workers.

In the crusade for improved labor conditions we must consider the Federal and State departments of labor. While these bodies do not by any means accomplish as much as they could, they are still worthy of consideration, because of the facts concerning labor which they place before the public, and the dignity which their existence confers upon the problems they are organized to consider. Many people have grown to distrust investigations conducted by governmental agencies, because of the seeming dread on the part of these agencies to let unfor-

tunate conditions be known. Masses of facts are sure to be arrayed, but in such fashion that critical judgment rarely accompanies them.

It will be remembered that the Federal Government undertook, in the fall of 1907, the most elaborate investigation into the conditions of labor of women and children, in specified industries in the United States, that was ever undertaken by any body of investigators. It will also be remembered that a good deal of this material was so old as to be practically useless, before any of it appeared in print.

It is not necessary here to go into the reasons for this delay. It will be sufficient to indicate that similar delays occur frequently in the publication of government reports. These delays have been one of the important factors leading to the establishment of special bodies charged with the work of investigation. Among these may be mentioned The American Association for Labor Legislation,[1] affiliated with the International body, which exists for the purpose of studying carefully all the needs of each state and drafting model laws to meet

[1] Headquarters, 131 East Twenty-third street, New York.

these needs. This organization has been a very great help to all of those persons who are working for improved conditions through legislation, and up to the present time, such legislation, following a careful investigation, seems to be about the best method we know for controlling conditions of labor. The laboring man and woman alone cannot be expected to obtain for themselves all needed legislation. They must be helped by people of more knowledge and experience.

In recent years, the question of unemployment has come conspicuously to the front, and this applies to women, at the present time, with almost as much force as to men. It is, moreover, one of the most difficult problems that we have to deal with. Legislation alone cannot correct the evil. Doubtless suitable legislation, together with the cooperation of employers and employees and the general public, could effect changes for the better.

In women's work much unemployment is caused by seasonal trades. The effect of this has been spoken of before. It is particularly noticeable in the millinery trade, for example. Unemployment also exists, to a great extent, in

those trades which are commonly known as "fashion trades," where a sudden change sweeps over the country, with an effect upon the workers almost as devastating as that of a plague. A good illustration of this was observed a few years ago when the rage for long, black *glacé* kid gloves gripped the country, and women, apparently, had no higher object in life than to secure a pair of these elbow-length gloves. The effect upon the glove trade in general was most disastrous. Merchants were stocked with short and long gloves of other styles and fabrics, but orders for the new type swamped their establishments until, even in the great cities, some of the large stores were obliged to limit the sale to one pair to a purchaser. Few consumers at that time thought of the young women workers in the glove trade. Probably comparatively few consumers ever think seriously of the effect of their purchases upon the workers in any trade. It would seem, however, that much good could be accomplished by establishing a closer connection between the maker and the wearer of any article.

Unemployment causes a grave situation at any time, but it always must be serious when

young girl workers are thrown out upon the world without resources. There are difficulties connected with finding work for young women that do not appear conspicuously when seeking employment for men. Woman labor is less mobile. Women are held to a location by family ties to a much greater extent than men are. Therefore, the fact that there are openings for work a thousand miles from the worker who needs a place is not very much of a help. There is even a handicap in such a situation when men have family obligations to meet. There are too many uncertainties connected with labor at a distance to warrant the expense of moving families.

2. Types of Law

So far, various free employment bureaus have not been particularly successful in placing girls and women in industrial occupations. An exception to this would be the few model bureaus that have been started by philanthropists in New York and other cities. Such experiments only go to show the possibilities for help along this line. Bureaus of this type should be developed wherever possible in order to help

bridge over disastrous periods of unemployment.

In the better-paid occupations women can afford a little idle time, but where existence pushes hard against the weekly wage, no idle time can be afforded. It is impossible for poorly paid workers to tide themselves over a period of stress without assistance from some source. This whole situation touches very closely upon the question of wages and recent attempts that have been made to standardize wage rates in certain great trades. Such attempts are not new in some parts of the world. Victoria, in Australia, has had a minimum wage board since 1896. We also find some form of fixing minimum wages in operation in other Australian states and New Zealand. Great Britain has had similar boards since 1910.

The establishment of minimum wage boards in at least ten of our states is an indication of an effort to help the young workers in the poorly paid trades, and to enable them to adjust for themselves some of the difficulties of unemployment. Wages of women are low for several different reasons, but probably the primary cause is comparative inefficiency, due, perhaps,

to physical limitations and lack of training, together with lack of organization and the long established custom of regarding woman's work as a temporary makeshift, and the tradition that her labor is inferior to man's.

The Massachusetts Minimum Wage Board, which led the way in the United States, was established in 1912, and the commission appointed by the state legislature was instructed to study the wages of women and minors in Massachusetts in certain specified trades, and, upon the results of such investigation, to indicate a reasonable sum below which the wage, in the given trade, may not fall. Other states have followed this lead, and the general opinion seems to be that in the neighborhood of eight dollars is the lowest weekly wage which should be paid for honest work. In some instances it runs a little above or a little below this sum.

The point of departure in this investigation is that a trade that is financially unable to pay a living wage to its workers is parasitic and not entitled to survive. Some other industry, or the community at large, is helping to pay the bills, and this seems to be a poor arrange-

ment for all concerned. If it costs the young woman worker eight dollars a week to pay for bare existence needs in our large cities, the industry paying a six- or seven-dollar wage to this girl is not entitled to the assistance of the community, but someone has to make up the deficit.

The establishment of the minimum wage is undoubtedly of great value, yet it must be remembered that only disaster is likely to overtake changes made too suddenly. An order to increase the wages of all employees one or two or more dollars a week at once, might mean bankruptcy for individual concerns. Therefore, the most satisfactory laws are bound to be those which recognize the necessity for giving time to make the necessary adjustment. It is a very complicated question. Of course, the girls who are not making a living wage need to have the increase made immediately, but if it were made immediately, in many instances, it might mean no work at all because of bankruptcy in business. Needs come swiftly; reforms do not, and perhaps cannot.

Labor legislation has piled up on the statute books of most of the American states in recent years, and has brought greater comforts in

many respects to the workers. They have a shorter working day; probably an average day of ten hours, while it is less than this in some states. Years ago twelve or fourteen hours were the rule. We have greater physical comforts resulting, and now we have compensation for illness and death in over thirty of our states. In addition to this there are pension funds of various kinds designed to help the worker in time of stress. Laws alone of course are useless without vigorous inspection and enforcement, and this the community must insist upon.

3. Contributions of Private Organizations

But legislation is not all that society has contributed to aid the women who work. Private bodies of various kinds have long been in the field to ameliorate conditions. It would be impossible here to enumerate these at length, but we can at least specify some of the more important of the efforts. First among these may be mentioned the work of employers in behalf of their employees, a type of undertaking commonly known as "welfare work." Several hundred employers of labor in this country

have come to see, in recent years, the utter futility of industrial strife, and have tried to lessen this by means of specific undertakings for the comfort and happiness of their employees. Such undertakings are particularly noticeable in places where women are employed in large numbers.

Welfare work always varies with the type of employer who undertakes it, and on this account it is perhaps a less certain method of industrial peace than some others. In general, however, welfare work may be said to consist in making physical conditions attractive, in furnishing restrooms, and lunchrooms, and reading-rooms, with the possible organization of clubs and classes, and also, frequently, the organization of some kind of health service, with either doctors or nurses, or both, in attendance.

The employers who have been most successful in such undertakings are the ones who have made it possible for the employees to help themselves in these matters. In cases where the employer has been satisfied to bestow all of these things upon his workers, they have soon grown weary of the gifts and have commenced

to complain because wages were not raised. The general feeling among workers seems to be that they would rather have the extra money spent in raising wages than in providing comforts and pleasures. They think that they themselves could look after their own pleasures if they had the means. Wise cooperation between the employer and his workers would doubtless obviate such a difficulty. Indeed, it has obviated it in many cases in this country. But gifts alone will never keep peace between capital and labor, a fact well known to wise employers.

Another objection sometimes urged against welfare work as at present carried on, is that it is inherently antagonistic to trade unionism, and thus it seeks to curtail the liberty of the workers. The trade union may or may not be the best type of organization for labor, but the average worker regards it as a promoter of liberty, and that is greatly in its favor, from the standpoint of American workers. Capital and labor working together is undoubtedly the ideal condition, and if this happy state can be brought about by means of employers' efforts, they should be welcomed by all.

The extent of employers' undertakings is seen through the National Civic Federation, with headquarters in New York City. This federation consists of a large body of enlightened employers and others who are striving to get some order out of the chaos of industrialism by establishing welfare features in their work. Doubtless much good has resulted from the efforts of this body, but the general feeling seems to be that through its policy labor has practically no voice in improving conditions for itself, and thus the greatest stimulus for activity is lacking.

The community's interest in the wage-earner is best seen through the activity of the National Consumers' League,[1] which has been working for nearly a quarter of a century to awaken the interest of consumers in the conditions of production and distribution. There are a number of state leagues in the national organization, and they are all working for improved conditions among women workers. The league first centered its efforts upon obtaining better conditions in retail stores, and bent its energies

[1] The Secretary is Mrs. Florence Kelley, 289 Fourth Avenue, New York.

to secure the cooperation of leading merchants, whose establishments were indorsed by the league if they came up to the conditions of a "fair house." By this was meant a compliance with state law in regard to hours and sanitary conditions, a provision for seats to be used by saleswomen when not actually engaged in selling goods, and the observance of a certain minimum wage which varied according to state or city.

Since the beginning, the work has branched out in many directions, and the organization is now a powerful factor in the struggle to obtain better conditions through improved legislation. This organization tried from the beginning to arouse in people who buy, a responsibility for the conditions under which their goods were made and sold. This, of course, is a slow process of education, but it has gained much ground in this country in the last few years. Now there is a considerable body of people who feel a social responsibility resting upon them when they spend their money.

We must mention here another type of effort in behalf of wage-earning women, found in some of the larger foundations devoted to re-

search, the Russell Sage Foundation being one. Very valuable investigations into the conditions of labor have been made by this organization. These have profoundly affected some of the trades in which women are employed. Certain of the studies made in the Pittsburgh Survey come under this head, as well as the studies of women in bookbinding and other trades, published by Miss Mary Van Kleek. It is only in comparatively recent years that large sums of money have been free to be used in such studies.

With the state itself, employers of labor, the enlightened consumers, and approved organizations enlisted in the interests of women workers, it would seem that their conditions must be better in the future than they have been in the past.

CHAPTER VI

HEALTH AND HOUSING

ONE cannot consider labor conditions among women for any length of time without having brought prominently to the front the two vital questions of health and housing. While it is quite true that a large percentage of young women who work for wages live at home, and go back and forth from their work each day, it is also quite true that a number, large enough to be considered, do not have the advantages, or disadvantages, as they may sometimes prove to be, of home life. This group includes young women bereft of family connections, and also those who have migrated from the country and smaller towns in order to seek their fortunes in cities.

Various estimates of the size of this second group have been made from time to time in the larger cities, but they are, after all, only fair guesses, because young wage-earners seem to cling to the belief that it is more aristocratic, or fashionable, or something else, to state that

they live at home, when, as a matter of fact, they do not, but simply board, or lodge, with a woman who, for social reasons, they call "aunt." This may seem amusing on the face of it, but it really is not; it is simply an effort on the part of the girl away from home to get for herself something of that home life which is considered so desirable by all of us. The "aunt" may be a most undesirable person, but it must be admitted that she lends an air of respectability to the otherwise lone life of the lodger.

Young girls who work for wages have the same little subterfuges that other girls have, and they should not be laid up against them and classed with moral lapses. If it gives Mary Smith any joy to call her boarding mistress "aunt," then let Mary have that joy. But we have to discount this little ruse when estimating the number of girls who live at home and go to work. One other thing that must be considered in this connection is that, while a very large proportion of young working women do live at home, an unusually large proportion of these pay their wages, in whole or in part, into the family treasury, and thus they are no better

off financially than the girls who seek living arrangements outside of their families. The young women who work for "pin money" are few in number, because it has been definitely ascertained that women who work outside the home for a wage do so because of financial need, and not simply to earn a little extra spending money for themselves.

1. Problem of Housing Single Women

As far back as the early days of the Lowell mills, employers of labor had to make provision for housing young women workers, and they did this by means of the corporation boarding-house, which, in many cases, was a poor enough apology for a home, but in practically all cases in those days, kept up an animated show of religion by opening and closing the day with thanksgiving and prayer. While no objection could be urged against this, in itself, it sometimes exposed the boarding home to ridicule when one observed the hardships that were placed upon the girls living there.

Now, of course, the corporation boarding-house has practically gone out of existence, except in small places, or near industrial plants

remote from large towns. Wherever an employer brings in large numbers of girls to work in his factory or mill, he must provide some place for them to live, unless he is assured that the community itself is furnishing the necessary accommodation. In our large cities there is, naturally, at the present time, no demand for the employer to concern himself greatly with the housing problem. This has been left to boarding-house and lodging-house keepers, and philanthropy. It is a well-known fact that the average accommodation open to a girl on low wages, in our big cities, is of the poorest kind from the physical standpoint—not to mention the moral. It is difficult, indeed, for workers with good incomes to provide satisfactory living arrangements for themselves, and it must be infinitely more difficult for the girl on scant wages.

Private philanthropy, it is true, has taken up this matter of housing the working girl, and homes of one kind or another may be found in all of our larger cities. Some of these have doubtless filled a need, while many others have always been open to the somewhat grave charge that they are not self-supporting. Where they

are not, those availing themselves of living arrangements for which they do not adequately pay, will eventually lose somewhat in self-respect. It is possible, however, for clubs, or homes for young women, to be established and maintained on a self-supporting basis.

One of the best examples of this endeavor may be found in the Eleanor Clubs of Chicago. There homes for young wage-earners have passed the experimental stage, since they have now completed the seventeenth anniversary of the founding of the first one. There are, at the present time, six Eleanor Clubs, an Eleanor League for little girls, and a summer camp in the country—besides a large and flourishing non-residential club in the down-town district—and all of this has been brought to pass because one woman of means had sufficient wisdom and business acumen to see the need and to proceed to fill it.

Other cities can give illustrations of self-supporting homes, too, but the Chicago undertaking is on so much larger a scale, and so much older in years, that a discussion of its usefulness will serve for all the rest. These clubs are maintained by the Eleanor Associa-

tion, and, altogether, take care of upwards of three thousands girls in the course of a year, and all of these pay not only actual running expenses but interest on money originally invested. Unquestionably, such an undertaking is a great contribution to the housing problem so far as young women are concerned — particularly when rates are low, as they are in all of the Eleanor houses. These range from $2.75 to $5.00 a week, for board and lodging — the variation in charge being due to a corresponding variation in location, or as to whether the young woman occupies a single room or a bed in a dormitory.

Some have felt that it might prove unwise, and act as a force to keep wages down if there should be a great number of homes providing such reasonable accommodation. Possibly it might act in this way, but there would need to be an infinitely larger number than philanthropy would ever be willing to provide. It must be admitted that cooperative living offers unexplored possibilities for reducing living expenses, and for making life pleasanter for lonely girls. But it must be remembered that young and ignorant workers can rarely manage

by themselves cooperative housing arrangements. They are too complicated for youth and inexperience to grapple with. It seems essential that a third party, in the form of an interested group, should take the initiative in providing homes for such girls.

Unquestionably, people who are well fed and properly housed can do more efficient work than those who are starving and shivering in the most dismal corners of our great cities. A young girl alone is always forlorn; she needs companionship, and this she gets in the Eleanor Clubs of Chicago.

The Young Women's Christian Association has gone into this problem of housing working girls on a large scale for many years, but the homes thus provided have not always been on a paying basis, although the tendency now is to see that they are self-supporting from the start. There is a permanence in housing efforts conducted by the Young Women's Christian Associations that has been lacking, to a certain extent, in most other undertakings. It is a self-perpetuating organization, and tends always to extend rather than curtail its work. There are, of course, objections in certain classes to the

Association homes on certain religious grounds that are either real or apparent. This in itself should not be a criticism of the work, for the reason that there are many more needy ones in every field to be assisted than existing forces can take care of. There is a feeling among students of the subject in general, that it is possibly more democratic, to say the least, to provide housing quite apart from any form of religious belief; but that, after all, is a personal matter that must be worked out by each individual, or group of individuals, striving to help house the girls who are away from home and engaged in industrial pursuits.

2. Private Attempts to Supply Needs

So close is the connection between living conditions and health, that many employers of labor have been interesting themselves for some years in the question of food for their workers. Some have taken the ground that it pays them, from the purely business standpoint, to provide a good hot lunch, without any charge whatever, to their employees, and they are doing just this thing in hundreds of establishments all over the land. They do know, they say, that an em-

ployee who has had a good breakfast does much more satisfactory work than one who has had nothing at all to eat, or something almost worse than nothing—such as a dill pickle and a cracker, which forms a favorite breakfast among young factory girls in every place. Knowing this, they have not hesitated long before providing a substantial meal in the middle of the day.

But this free lunch has been a stumbling block to many. It savors of paternalism, we are told; it destroys the self-respect of the one who accepts it, says another; while still a third urges that it tends to lower wages. Organized labor, of course, would stand together in condemning such assistance, insisting that it would be much better for the employee to have an increase in wages and furnish himself the hot lunch. Such questions are far-reaching and need careful consideration. Perhaps the employers who furnish wholesome food at noon, at cost, do better for their employees than those who furnish it free of charge. This is an ethical question, and one of some significance.

Employers of labor, as a rule, are quite ready to see the advantage of providing good physical

conditions for work. This is more particularly true of the large corporations. They are, perhaps, more willing because they are better able to spend money now for future results than some of the smaller concerns. Therefore, their workrooms are likely to be clean and their sanitary conditions good. So far as all of these things react upon the well-being of the worker they are good, quite as good as law enforcement. Most employers have gone away beyond this point in providing a happy and interesting life outside of working hours for their employees, and these attempts have met with varying results.

3. Occupational Diseases

Since we are now living in an age of efficiency worship, we shall expect to hear, on all sides, something of the connection between health and efficiency on the part of the working woman. She must be made efficient at all hazards. This belief tends to awaken general interest in those who work for wages. The efficient worker must be a healthy person and she must be a happy person. Therefore health and happiness must be furnished to our young citizens in industry, if they are to function suc-

cessfully. Our search for methods of improving efficiency may lead to the establishment of vocational schools, as well as to the establishment of model homes. It may lead to the provision for wholesome recreation, as well as for wholesome free lunches. Moreover, it may lead us into an inquiry as to the physical effects of certain types of labor; that is, into the study of occupational diseases — a field in which comparatively little has been done in the United States, but one in which much has been done in England and on the Continent.

Any thoughtful student must admit the importance of knowing how far an occupation in and of itself tends to sap the strength and vigor of the worker, before recommending it as a suitable field for employment. If, for example, work in telephone exchanges tends to make nervous wrecks of the girls who do this work, it behooves society to know it, and to provide, in some way, for offsetting these calamitous effects. If the weaving of bright-colored plaid silks tends to destroy the eyesight of those who do the weaving, it is of the greatest importance to society that some change should be made to offset this serious hazard.

Healthy workers are of the greatest possible value to society, and they should not be sacrificed for fads or fancies in manufacture or education.

It is not always easy to sift out diseases caused primarily by occupation from those which develop in the worker while engaged in that particular occupation. A highly nervous girl, for instance, might give out very soon under the strain of telephone work, while her more phlegmatic sister might endure for years. Therefore, one must weigh evidence carefully before saddling disease on an industry. Yet, on the other hand, there are sufficiently clear instances of disease due directly to labor, to prove conclusively that there are trades which jeopardize the physical well-being of the young women who labor in them, and such must be investigated carefully.

The vital facts of health and housing must be kept ever in mind by those who are seeking to develop a healthier and happier working class in our midst. Work itself, under good conditions, can only be considered desirable. It is bad conditions, coupled with lack of work, that make for misery—physical as well as moral.

CHAPTER VII

EDUCATION AND RECREATION FOR TOILERS

IN the general movement to popularize education in this country the wage worker has not been overlooked. Efforts of various kinds have been made to extend to him the benefits of knowledge, and the wage-earning woman has profited by these. Since the beginning of social settlement activities in our great cities, it has been possible for working people to obtain in evening clubs and classes a supplementary education. Sometimes, in fact, it has been not supplementary, but practically the only education that the individual has been able to acquire. In past years in many of our cities, children were allowed to work at so early an age that the completion of even a rudimentary school course was quite out of the question even if it had been desired, but, in most cases, it was not, either by the children themselves, who wearied of school, or by the parents, who saw in their children only possible wage-earners.

1. Vocational Training

The earlier settlement educational activities tended to run along literary lines. Young people, worn with the day at the loom or spindle, were supposed, a generation ago, to have an insatiable thirst for information concerning the poets to the exclusion of things somewhat more fundamental. In recent years, however, there has been a more general recognition of the fact that a day's monotonous labor tends to unfit one for very serious work at night—the only available time in which classes can be held for these workers, and people are swinging over to a belief in the gospel of a good time. Therefore, education and recreation for toilers are advisedly discussed together. Life without recreation is only half a life, and if pleasure can be given an educational turn, then so much the better for the education, as well as for the pleasure.

It was inevitable that our thinking about the best type of education for wage-earners should become more practical with the passing of the years. The poets are all very well, we say, if the girl knows the things that she ought to

know about the work that she is trying to do. The poets, then, seem to have become a luxury in our popular educational system, while vocational training is now recognized as a necessity.

While we are all assured that vocational training is essential, we are not at all agreed as to the best method of furnishing this requisite training. The girl as well as the boy should be instructed in the sort of work that she or he is going to make her or his wage-earning occupation, but just how to instruct in this to the best advantage is not clear. Some are convinced that the only way is through the public school, while others insist that the public-school system is not yet ready for such an addition, and that private initiative must supply the instruction. It matters not so much what organization provides training as it does that the training shall be adequate to needs and accessible to all.

It would seem on the face of it that the public schools could handle such a large order with somewhat greater ease than private institutions; that is, after the way has been pointed out by these same private institutions. Perhaps

the most interesting trade school that we know anything about in the United States is the Manhattan Trade School of New York, conducted for some ten years by a group of philanthropic private individuals under the leadership of Mrs. Mary Schenck Woolman, and later passed over to the Board of Education of New York City to be managed as an integral part of the city school system. In the first decade of its existence, this school proved beyond the shadow of a doubt that trade training was of practical financial gain to the young girls who availed themselves of its opportunities. They were instructed, in the main, in those trades centering around the needle and the paste brush, and acquired so much skill in from three to nine months that they were able to earn a wage fully a third higher than their sisters who had gone into industry without such preparation. Financial need in some cases was met by the award of scholarships equivalent to the wage that could be earned by the girl if she were working without training. It seemed in certain families that such help was an absolute necessity, but in many other cases families found that they could get along without it, and

either stopped the stipend or made arrangements to pay it back.

If the girl at fourteen could be taken and trained along the line of her inclinations and she finds that she possesses any definite preferences, and is then able to earn an advantageous increase over the untrained girl, it would seem a social gain to enable her to start out with this advantage. It is true that she must have a certain fundamental knowledge of reading, writing and figuring that can be gained in the ordinary school. But it is questionable if seven or eight years ought to be devoted to acquiring this kind of knowledge. Vocational courses might be provided along with the others in the later years of the grammar school. It may be said in reply to this that very few young people, either girls or boys, have much idea what sort of work they wish to engage in, and that therefore it would be extremely difficult to direct inquirers into the proper line of instruction. Nevertheless, while it may be true that the majority have no decided preferences, it must be admitted that very few will not respond to some line of suggestion when under the guidance of a person properly equipped to

give the necessary advice. Even small children have preferences. The four-year-old boy longs to be a street car conductor, while the small girl insists that dressmaking or millinery is full of charms for her.

It would seem that most young people rush into the industry that is nearest to them geographically, or the one that appeals to them for some social reason. Nationality, too, exercises an influence. For example, few American girls are found in the box-making industry in the Eastern states; while in the shoe trade in New England many Americans still earn their daily bread. The girls in some families naturally drift to the shops seeking employment, while others drift to the factory, with the natural result that there are misfits. Many choose an occupation, such as work in stores, that permits them to be more or less "dressed-up," while others are more attracted by a higher wage in textile mills, where dress is not a factor to be considered.

Without question, one of the most vital problems of our time is how to make educational advantages available for the multitude of workers who do not or cannot get an education in

their childhood. For these the public schools have opened their doors at night, during the winter, in many of our large cities, and many private organizations stand ready to offer a helping hand. But to those who are just entering industry, the real need is for trade training before beginning work.

2. Types of Trade School

The experiment of the Women's Educational and Industrial Union in Boston in maintaining a school[1] for saleswomen has been so successful as to warrant trial in other places. Those trained in the principles supposed to underlie the selling of goods, and the necessary knowledge of the goods themselves, advanced rapidly when given positions in some of the leading stores in Boston. This training has been carried on for several years most successfully and convinces one of the value of a scientific knowledge of goods on the part of the person who is trying to make a sale. For instance, if the girl who is selling colored calico knows something about the dyeing processes of

[1] New York University now offers courses for those wishing to become teachers of salesmanship.

that grade of goods, she may be able to inform the would-be purchaser of its durability when exposed to sun and water. Merchants would find this knowledge much more valuable than the ignorant falsehoods foisted upon a stranger by a saleswoman who thinks there is nothing in her occupation beyond coercing a customer into making a purchase.

Even though the question of vocational training were settled once for all, and every young worker in the land were able to avail herself of it, there still would be a large and open field for the private organizations to fill with educational opportunities, because we would still hope that the vocationally trained young worker would be ambitious to extend her knowledge into new and unexplored regions. Thus the social settlement and other types of social centers would have ample scope for their activities. And when they could combine their educational with their recreational features, the young workers would be the gainers.

Those who work long hours at monotonous tasks need physical as well as mental stimulation when their work is over. The profes-

sional worker who leaves his desk, is in an entirely different class, since he gets joy and stimulation from the work itself, and the knowledge of his own achievement. But one whose task is minute and monotonous has no such joy, but only the weariness of monotony to encompass him after hours of activity. The girl, for instance, who operates a button sewing machine in a shoeshop, has no scope for originality or the development of her own individuality. She must perform that endless process endlessly, until her brain becomes numbed and her mind starved for something more enlivening. This is where the play element must appear to save happiness to a humdrum world.

Young workers ordinarily are eager to take pleasure where they find it. Otherwise the effects of monotonous labor might be more devastating than they are. But since the pleasures at hand are not always legitimate, it behooves right thinking people everywhere to furnish recreation that is legitimate and uplifting as well as joy-giving. One of the most difficult problems to meet in this connection is that of providing enjoyment that does not destroy the moral fibre of the individual.

Commercial agencies are always ready in the field to provide entertainment for young workers, and since the profits are the only concern of these agencies, the entertainments they produce are often salacious. The forces of darkness seem often to be much more active than the forces of light; but with all our boards of censorship and committees of regulation, it would seem that our amusements at the present time should be well supervised, and the morals of our young workers not endangered.

3. Provision Made by Various Groups

When furnishing entertainments for wage-earning women, the tastes of the women themselves must be considered. If they prefer dances to theatrical entertainments or *vice versa,* some effort should be made to cater to their preferences. In a study of many thousands of working women[1] that I made several years ago, I found that the theater, usually called the "show," divided honors with the dance in practically all localities. It would therefore seem futile to undertake to furnish entertainment for such groups without consid-

[1] *Wage Earning Women.*

ering this marked preference. Of what use are trolley rides and skating parties when one's heart is at the dance or the theatrical performance? The vicious dance hall or the cheap show have flourished almost beyond belief in our big cities, and because of this innate desire on the part of young people to find enjoyment. Quiet pleasures make only a slight appeal to those whose occupational hours are devoted to dull and monotonous tasks.

Practically all of our big industries have recognized the need for providing entertainment for their workers, and have made various attempts to meet this need. Some have an annual picnic or excursion of vast proportions, and feel that they have thereby discharged their full duty; while others have weekly or monthly entertainments. When these are conducted in a democratic fashion they must be regarded as valuable aids in the general movement to extend legitimate pleasures. When managed in a paternalistic way they are likely to breed only discontent.

It must be conceded that many of our large employers of labor have made honest and successful efforts to meet this problem of provid-

ing pleasure to their workers, yet when all this is admitted, there are still millions of working women wholly untouched by such commendable enterprises, and it is for these that society at large should have a care. Many of our municipalities are trying to fill this need by the establishment of neighborhood houses in the small parks, as is the case in Chicago, or with social centers, recreation piers, and the like, such as they have in New York City. Both of these cities have been notably successful in reaching out and grasping those who are hungering for social expression along the lines of entertainment.

We have in some of our large cities organizations devoted entirely to the well-being of young women. An example of this is the Young Women's Christian Association, which carries on work in their behalf in about a thousand centers in the land. This organization throws considerable emphasis on educational and recreational features. It has been particularly successful in managing summer-outing places, where girls may spend a one or two weeks' vacation at a low cost, in some attractive place in the country. This is a ver-

itable boon to young women workers. It is difficult to find suitable and safe accommodations at summer resorts for those who have limited means, and the organization that undertakes to supply this great need is a benefactor.

The Young Women's Christian Association summer camps and homes provide accommodations for over ten thousand young women in the course of a season. And their popularity is seen from the long waiting lists that they have. This is the largest scale summer-outing work that we have in the country. Other organizations, such as the Eleanor Association of Chicago are able to house several hundred during the summer. The Working Girls' Vacation Society of New York City maintains a number of cottages, but the need for more of them is very great. It will not be possible here to enumerate undertakings of this sort since their name is legion. It is pleasant, however, to know that the recreational side of life is not being neglected by the more serious organizations.

An interesting work has been carried on in New York City for several years by the Vacation Committee of the Women's Department

of the National Civic Federation. This committee has so far not undertaken the management of special resorts, but has been able through careful investigation to recommend to girls of small means, suitable boarding-houses in the country, not very remote from New York. Lists of such places are always ready for distribution, but girls must make their own arrangements. In addition to this, an effort has been made to recommend places within commuting distance of the city, so that those who have not a vacation or who cannot afford to take one, may at least have the benefit of country life when work is over for the day. Many other organizations have established or are planning to establish summer camps within a five-cent fare of city work. The necessity for recreation is forced upon us as it never was before. The strain consequent on the speed of modern industrial processes is destructive of strength and even life, if persisted in too long. Therefore it is obvious that social well-wishers everywhere must take an increasing interest in providing normal pleasures to offset the destructive influences of toil.

Several generations ago, when women work-

ers labored at loom and spindle twelve and even fourteen hours a day, they were not as exhausted as they appear to be now with a much shorter working day; the reason, of course, being that the pressure upon the worker has increased year by year with improvements in machinery and greed on the part of the employer to get the most possible service out of his working people. The shorter working day is a good thing, but society must have a care that employees are not pushed too hard and too far, in order to make up for lost time. If they are overworked, the results fall back finally upon the society which permits this undue exhaustion and under the name of a shorter working day.

CHAPTER VIII

THE SOCIALIZATION OF INDUSTRY

SINCE industry is the very bone and brawn of our national life, it would seem that a vast amount of attention should be given to the effect of industrial processes upon the social group at large. It is a platitude to say that without industry we could have no nation; yet it is no platitude to insist that society has been too careless in regard to the reaction between those who are engaged in industries, and the industries themselves. The thought of amassing fortunes has been so much more engrossing than the thought of conserving human life that the latter has been very nearly lost from view.

The twentieth century has been giving evidence that the more alert thinkers are coming to recognize as never before the value of human life. That is, the value not to the individual himself, but to the larger social group of which he is an integral part. Men and women engaged in the making of shoes or cans or cotton cloth, are more to society than mere machine

tenders for a definite number of hours per day. They are primarily human beings, engaged in industrial tasks in order that they may do their share of the world's work, and in order that they may not be a burden upon anybody else.

But life is more than industrial processes, and life should hold more than nine or ten hours a day of drudgery for any given individual. Work everyone should have, and every person should be glad to engage in honest labor. But it must be admitted that the man or the woman who is able to get practically nothing from the world but body-destroying toil and a place to sleep, with perhaps barely enough to eat, has been cheated somewhat in the distribution of the good things of life. This may be due to an accident, or it may be due to carelessness on the part of society, or natural defects on the part of the individual. In any case a careful survey of the situation should help to straighten things out to some extent.

1. Modern Industry Dulls the Social Instinct

When industry was carried on in the home it was social. There was always time for chatter and laughter while work was in process;

but not so in our modern industrial era, where, ordinarily, in the up-to-date factory, there are stringent regulations against the chatter and laughter that help to make youth pleasant. Doubtless this cannot be avoided; if hundreds or thousands of employees were given *carte blanche* to converse as they pleased, industry would soon be at a standstill and chaos would reign.

Wherever large bodies of people are gathered together for labor, regulations must exist. This fact emphasizes the importance of trying to fit the individual to the work and the work to the individual as far as this can be done. An interest and something of pleasure in work would go far to counteract the deadening influences of mirthless labor, and particularly where the laborers are young and inexperienced girls. "Industry is not a circus," said one employer when asked if it would be possible for him to inject a little more of human interest into his plan. "Industry is not a circus," he said. "It is a solemn reality, and it is no place for giggling girls and smirking boys." Thus did one millionaire free his mind from any further responsibility in regard to the

twelve thousand people who worked for him for wages.

No reasonable person asks that industrial processes be made entertaining. The most one asks is that a little interest be injected into the long day of arduous toil. We have seen that many organizations in this country as well as many enlightened employers of labor are doing what they can to extend educational or recreational features for this very purpose. And if we can only wait long enough, we shall probably see a much more complete socialization of industry than we have today. It is not too much to hope that the community as a whole will feel its responsibility for every member of the social group, not only for those who are directly interested industrially and financially in progress, but for those whose most elaborate efforts yield them only a scanty livelihood.

"We are all members one of another" is coming to be recognized as a practical statement of community responsibility, and we are realizing that "if one member suffers, all the other members suffer with it." It is the extension of this spirit alone that can be powerful enough to effect desired changes. And it mat-

ters not whether this era of brotherly love shall come in by the road of radical political philosophy or by way of the more familiar path of religious teaching; the important thing is to establish the principle.

The time has passed long since when we can sit calmly back and piously assert "that man must work and woman must weep." Our new social philosophy teaches us that the weeping must be stopped all around, and that the working must be injected with new spirit.

2. *Problem of Women Workers a National One*

Women are too valuable to society to be sacrificed wantonly in industry. They are entering industrial occupations in ever-increasing numbers, and it is doubtful if this is a fact to be deplored. It is a stern financial necessity for the overwhelming majority of them. But this necessity forces upon them responsibilities which tend to make for independence and should make for efficiency. The young and heedless must ever be aided by those of larger experience. And in a democracy, particularly, this extension of aid should be given ungrudgingly.

No community can advance to great spiritual heights so long as it ignores the thousands of women employees engaged in its varied industrial undertakings. And this assistance must be given not sentimentally but rationally. It is always easy to work up sentiment in regard to young girls who go out from home daily to earn their bread, but such outbursts of sentiment do no one any good. What is really needed is a frank recognition that the problems of each are the problems of all. That is, the problems of the eight million women wage-earners today in the United States are the problems of the one hundred million or more people who live over the entire country.

What is needed, however, is not so much sentiment in regard to the undue hardships pressed upon girls who work by the conditions of modern industry. What is needed is a stern realization of the fact that the placing of too hard burdens upon young working women today, makes for a weaker generation to replace the present one; and this is the concern of the social group as a whole. It must always be concerned with the potential mothers and fathers of the race. If these suffer unduly

while earning their daily bread, the whole social group must finally suffer. It would seem therefore that industry cannot be, and is not, purely a personal matter between employer and employee, as many employers are fond of insisting.

During the years following the middle of the nineteenth century and to its close, people seemed to be dominated by the thought that it was nobody's business how many were sacrificed to the Moloch of industry. With the development of social consciousness has come a new feeling and new estimate of the social value of the individual and society's right to protect him, if he needs protection.

The best way we have found of discharging social obligations to the weaker members of society is by enacting and enforcing desirable legislation. Some persons of course will be found who object to state interference with the right of the individual to work himself to death. Others, again, take the ground that it is up-to-date, the best means that we know of for protecting the interests of all. Even John Stuart Mill, who was a vigorous opponent of labor legislation at first, in later years became

its advocate, asserting that while it might not be absolutely right, it was expedient, since the young women of England needed to be protected and they were not able to protect themselves. Now people have pretty generally given up caviling over questions of this kind, and are devoting their energies to getting the best possible conditions for laboring women.

Owing to the fact that an overwhelming majority of the eight million self-supporting women[1] in this country are young and of foreign extraction, the problem of their securing good conditions for themselves is extremely difficult. They must have the moral support of mature and influential citizens. It goes without saying that these women perhaps more than any others, unless it be the mothers of children taken as a separate group, need the power of the ballot to aid them in securing better conditions for themselves and those dependent upon them. This alone is not all that they need. They must, besides, have educational and recreational opportunities if they are to fulfill to the highest their function in a

[1] This does not include housekeepers who work in their own homes.

democracy. Life should be more for them than mere wage-earning. It should hold for them a larger and fuller opportunity for work and for service. One of the most hopeful fields for the would-be helper is to be found in furthering movements among wage-earners to help themselves. Such movements must always be regarded as the most hopeful, and should be fostered if the best type of citizen is to be developed.

Paternalism in government is buried in the trenches of the past in this country of ours. And it is time that paternalism in industry hid its head if it wishes to avert a like fate. Co-operation between employer and employee should be the aim of all engaged in industrial processes, while the stimulation of the self-help motive should be the task of interested observers everywhere. Women should mean, and do mean, more to American social life than mere machines. It is a noble enough thing to operate a loom or a sewing machine, but it is a larger thing for a woman to develop into a valuable social member while she is engaged in these processes, and this she can do only by virtue of a living wage and a reasonably short work-

ing day, in addition to the extension of all possible opportunities to her by the social group as a whole.

3. The Progress Made in Bettering Conditions

In looking back along the line of industrial development in this country, so far as women are concerned, one sees constant changes that have taken place through the years as they have passed; changes that we must believe are for the better, although at a cursory glance the pressure of industry may seem more severe today than it has at any time in the past. But improvements have come in the hundred or more years through which we must look.

At the beginning, we see American-born young women carrying on the varied factory tasks with the more or less simple machinery then in use. But we see them working inhumanly long hours, for a mere pittance, and largely without regulations of any kind, save those imposed by the employer. Later on, when the first wave of immigration struck these shores, other changes appeared. That was the beginning of underbidding in the labor

market, and this naturally caused hardships for the time to the earlier employees who were accustomed to a higher standard of living.

The Irish woman first pushed her way in, as we have seen before. But with the arrival of each alien race new problems began to appear, until people became aroused, with the result that Massachusetts placed on her books the first factory act for women in this country. Then other states, we saw, followed in turn as the need became great, so that while immigrant workers pressed hard against the native-born, the states themselves were taking a hand to see that conditions did not become unbearable. So far as the native-born women workers were concerned, we have learned that they were gradually pushed out and up in the occupational scale. The textile workers of the Lowell mills became school teachers or bookkeepers, and felt that they had improved their social standing thereby.

After the first great onrush of immigration in this country after 1885, conditions did appear to be well-nigh intolerable, but, after all, a higher standard of living prevailed, and those who had been engaged in the lower indus-

trial processes were pushed up to the higher, so that history repeats itself even in the making of shoes or pasteboard boxes or cotton cloth. This pressure of nationality upon nationality has been severe in many instances, and the weaker groups tend to go under in the struggle, but this is not more true with women industrial workers than it is with men in the same fields of labor. The problem of this country has been and is to Americanize each of these alien groups and weld them all into an American whole—a long and somewhat trying process, it must be admitted.

Certain industries show more than do others the manner in which nationality has superseded nationality in this gigantic struggle for bread in the New World. As Professor Commons has pointed out in his book on labor problems,[1] the tailoring trade was first in the hands of the Scotch. Later, with the arrival of the Jews, the trade was practically monopolized by them; while now, so far as the ready-made part of the industry is concerned, and where women are employed, the Italians are coming

[1] Commons, J. R., *Trade Unionism and Labor Problems*. Ginn & Co., Boston.

into their own and tending to push the Jews somewhat to the back. This is observed in the shirtwaist industry, for example, perhaps better than in any other section of the clothes trade. An illustration of this was seen in New York City during the now famous shirtwaist-makers' strike of the year 1910, when more than 100,000 people were involved. Then, at all public meetings, it was necessary to have speeches made in Italian as well as in Yiddish or English — something that would not have been necessary fifteen years ago.

There is perhaps no special significance to be attached to this domination of the trade by a given race, except as an indication that the given race in question is determined to succeed in the New World, and for this reason it tends to absorb the occupation to which it is best adapted. It is, after all, only the old doctrine of the survival of the fittest. It is, however, interesting when viewed in connection with women's work, since racial tendencies and traditions do determine quite largely the occupational interest of the foreign girls. The Italians and the Jews, for instance, will rarely be found in the field of domestic service. This is due,

according to most observers, to the fact that a strong family feeling prevails even among the poorest and most forlorn of these peoples, and the desire to keep the young girls at home, particularly at night, is an overmastering one. Therefore the daughters naturally drift into occupations which claim their time only for certain definite hours each day, since this permits the maintenance of family relations the rest of the twenty-four hours. A generation of residence in the New World does not seem to have changed this attitude materially. Those who have advanced in the economic scale have passed beyond the need to have their daughters engage in domestic service or any other that may be considered menial, but they still wish to keep them at home.

Another point of interest to be noted in the survey of a hundred or more years of industry for women, is the vanishing of the American girl from the lower strata of labor. She is self-supporting now in larger percentage than ever before, but she has found her way into the shops and the offices and the professions, where she has made considerable headway in the last twenty-five years. The extension of

educational opportunities is responsible for this improvement.

After the Civil War, many women were forced to labor outside of their own homes, who previous to this time had not found such labor necessary. Many of them pushed their way into occupations more or less polite, such as journalism and teaching, and for which they were but illy prepared. They naturally sought occupations having a recognized social standing among men, and offered their services in these. Later years brought opportunities for training along these lines, and this has made the women more efficient, and they are also better paid. Thus as we look back along the vista of the years we see women workers gradually rising to a higher scale. The progress has been slow, and still is slow in certain groups, but it is encouraging, and if society as a whole will endeavor to extend its interest more widely into the realm of industry, it will find this to be to its own advantage as well as to the advantage of the individual women concerned.

The factory worker and shipping clerk and eyelet puncher and bobbin girl and loom tender

and doffer and box-maker and saleswoman and stenographer and teacher and lawyer and doctor and clergyman have common cause in this world of occupational interest, and conditions that make for the improvement of one are bound to effect good for all the others. This solidarity among women workers is the great need of the twentieth century. Society cannot get along without its women workers, and naturally enough the women workers cannot get on without society. They are one and must prosper together. Women workers, eight million strong, form one of the most valuable assets of the American nation. The task itself which women perform is unimportant; the spirit in which the task is performed is what makes for strength, and America can never reach the highest point of democratic strength if she fails to heed the needs of her women workers.

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